Chesnutt asks the reader if Green "died as the fool dieth."[29] The answer within the text lacks Fulton's certainty, but Chesnutt's nonfiction offers clues to his true opinion. For example, Chesnutt advocated violence in self-defense of life, liberty, and property in an essay published in 1891. Offering more proof of Chesnutt's support of the tactics employed by Miller and Green, William Gleason noted a passage in Chesnutt's biography of Frederick Douglass that compared Douglass and John Brown: "each played the part for which he was adapted. It would have strengthened the cause of liberty very little for Douglass to die with Brown."[30] One might conclude that Chesnutt would have expressed similar sentiments about Miller and Green.

Chesnutt suggested that race baiting inspired hatred beyond the control of its architects, reflecting Waddell's image of a mob beyond the control of its leaders. While observing the shootout at Miller's hospital between the armies of Green and McBane, Carteret declares, "I meant to keep them (blacks) in their places – I did not intend wholesale murder and arson." He implores the white mob to withdraw, shouting, "Gentlemen, this is murder and madness; it is a disgrace to our city, our state, to our civilization!" Carteret fails to realize that he used similar language to describe Negro rule in order to incite white anger. His words merely intensify the mob's thirst for blood.[31] In one sense, Chesnutt supported Waddell's claims that the lower classes terrorized the African American community; yet the novelist held the conspirators culpable for inciting the frenzy on November 10, 1898.

At the climax of the novel, the Carterets must turn to Miller to save the life of their son. At this last hour, Olivia Carteret acknowledges her half-sister, appealing to their shared blood and motherly instincts. Chesnutt presents a scene in which the "traditional" roles are reversed. Olivia first appeals to Dr. Miller, "at the feet of a negro, this proud white woman." He directs her to his wife for judgment: "The sad-eyed Janet towered erect, with menacing aspect, like an avenging goddess. The other [Olivia], whose pride had been her life, stood in the attitude of a trembling supplicant." Having lost her own son to a stray bullet during the course of events that day, Janet refuses to accept "your father's name, your father's wealth, your sisterly recognition," yet she agrees to permit her husband to save young Carteret. When Miller arrives at the Carteret home, the young doctor tending to the boy warns, "There's time enough, but none to spare."[32] Describing the novel in the *Cleveland World*, Chesnutt assured readers, "The book is not a study in pessimism, for it is the writer's belief that the forces of progress will in the end prevail, and that in time a remedy may be found for every social ill."[33] Some scholars have questioned the optimism of the novel's closing passage. Citing the extensive description of Dodie Carteret given at his birth, Jae H. Roe argued that Miller saves the "embodiment" of southern racism. Matthew Wilson argued that the closing passage was "a sleight of hand" trick in which Chesnutt gave white readers the illusion of hope for reconciliation. Wilson contended that *The Marrow of Tradition* marked a shift for Chesnutt away from the rhetoric of amalgamation articulated in the "Future American" series in favor of separatism, symbolized by Janet's rejection of her sister's

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[29] Chesnutt, *Marrow of Tradition*, pg. 309.
[30] Charles W. Chesnutt, "A Multitude of Counselors," *The Independent* 43 (April 2, 1891): 4-5; William Gleason, "Voices at the Nadir: Charles Chesnutt and David Bryant Fulton," in *Critical Essays on Charles Chesnutt*, ed. by Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. (New York: G.K. Hall, 1999): pg. 235.
[31] Chesnutt, *Marrow of Tradition*, pg. 305.
[32] Chesnutt, *Marrow of Tradition*, pg. 324, 326, 328-329.
[33] "Chesnutt's Own View," pg. 873.